



American Citizen Bulletin

November 2010

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

This month, we celebrate National Adoption Month in the United States. More children from China are adopted by American families into their homes than from any other country – more than 55,000 children over the last ten years alone. Americans are increasingly adopting children with special needs from China. Of the roughly 3,400 adoptions between China and the United State last fiscal year, approximately two thirds involved children with special needs.

When families open their hearts and homes to children who need a permanent, loving home, they give vulnerable children the opportunity to thrive. And families who adopt are enriched by the love of their new children, and the heritage they bring from their birth countries. This November we celebrate National Adoption Month and join with groups across the nation to recognize and honor the great commitment of all the families who embrace children through adoption.

For more information about intercountry adoption and a message from Secretary Clinton about adoption, please visit adoption.state.gov.

ACS CLOSURE NOTICE – November 25 & December 24

The American Citizen Services section will be closed on November 25 and for Thanksgiving Day and December 24 for Christmas. Be sure to schedule appointments on-line at <http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/service.html>. A complete list of all of our holiday closings is available at: <http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/holidays.html>.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Have you considered volunteering to serve as a warden? A warden is a private American citizen resident in a host country who volunteers to assist the American Citizen Services section of the U.S. Embassy in disaster preparedness, welfare and whereabouts, and alerting Americans to emergency situations. The U.S. Embassy in Beijing currently has wardens who know their American community well and have played important roles in past disaster events. As our expat community fluctuates, we are looking for new volunteers who are willing to serve the American community in the above capacity. We also ask all our current wardens to let us know if they are still interested in serving. If you are a long-term resident in China and interested in volunteering to serve the American community in your district, please contact the U.S. Embassy at amcitbeijing@state.gov.

BE AWARE OF IRS SCAMS

Recently, some overseas taxpayers have received bogus IRS letters via fax or email requesting them to complete a Form W-8BEN (Certificate of Foreign Status of Beneficial Owner for United States Tax Withholding). While the Form W-8BEN is a legitimate IRS form, it is sent to the recipients by their financial institutions, not the IRS. It is used to establish beneficial owner of financial accounts for withholding purposes.

There are also other types of emails claiming that you are due a refund from electronically filed tax return, and asked for personal information.

The IRS does NOT generally initiate fax or emails to taxpayers, nor does the IRS discuss tax account matters with taxpayers via email or fax. Moreover, the IRS never requests security-related personal information, such as your SSN or PIN numbers. Please be suspicious of any fax, email or phone call asking for your personal identification information.

How to protect Yourself from IRS scams

Taxpayers who receive a suspicious e-mail claiming to come from the IRS should take the following steps:

- Avoid opening any attachments to the e-mail, in case they contain malicious code that will infect your computer.
- Avoid clicking on any links, for the same reason. Alternatively, the links may connect to a phony IRS Web site that appears authentic and then prompts for personal identifiers, bank or credit card account numbers or PINs.
- Visit the IRS Web site, www.irs.gov, use the “Where’s My Refund?” interactive tool to determine if you are really getting a refund, rather than responding to the e-mail message.
- Forward the suspicious e-mail or URL address to the IRS mailbox phishing@irs.gov, and then delete the e-mail from the inbox.

For more information on IRS-impersonation scams, identity theft and suspicious e-mail, please go to <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=155682,00.html?portlet=7> You may also contact the IRS office in Building irs.beijing@irs.gov if you have further questions.

DON'T FORGET TO REGISTER YOUR GUEST WITH THE CHINESE POLICE

Do you have family or friends visiting for Thanksgiving? Did you know authorities expect you to register your guest with the police within 24 hours of their arrival in China? If they are staying in a hotel, the staff will automatically register them with the police. However, if they are staying with you or in a private home with family or friends, they must go to the local police station to register. For more China Specific Country information, please visit the State Department's website at www.travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1089.html.

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